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# Love Thy Neighbour: Social Identity and Public Support for Humanitarian Aid

Linda Alvarez<sup>1</sup>, Constantine Boussalis<sup>2</sup>, Jennifer L. Merolla<sup>3</sup> and Caryn A. Peiffer<sup>4</sup>

## Abstract

Humanitarian aid can be contentious. Should finite national resources be sacrificed to serve the needy abroad? Social identity theorists argue that identification with a superordinate group, in this case the larger world community, should increase individual support for policies such as international humanitarian assistance. However, individuals can simultaneously associate with multiple identities. How does the combination of world and national identities affect support for humanitarian assistance? Using cross-national survey data, we find evidence that support for international humanitarian aid is highest among those with a strong world identity and weak national identity relative to other identity combinations, though even those with a strong world identity and strong national identity can be supportive of aid.

**Keywords:** international aid, public opinion, social identity theory

*'We should stop sending foreign aid to countries that hate us and use that money to rebuild our tunnels, roads, bridges and schools.'*

President Donald Trump, 16 June 2015<sup>5</sup>  
US

## Introduction

Debates involving international humanitarian policies, such as providing overseas development assistance (ODA), are often contentious, and reasonably so. Appeals to assist people around the world who are in dire circumstances are often countered with arguments that domestic resources are better used at home. As noted in the quote above, on the campaign trail, Donald Trump called for an end to foreign aid, and now as president, is planning to make good that promise with a proposed budget that

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<sup>5</sup> Retrieved from: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/post-partisan/wp/2016/03/21/a-transcript-of-donald-trumps-meeting-with-the-washington-post-editorial-board/?utm\\_term=.83ed2175e877](https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/post-partisan/wp/2016/03/21/a-transcript-of-donald-trumps-meeting-with-the-washington-post-editorial-board/?utm_term=.83ed2175e877)

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drastically slashes the aid allocation<sup>6</sup>. At the same time, on the other side of the pond, some have argued that the British aid programme is receiving an unprecedented attack from the press as well as from a post-Brexit-referendum emboldened Conservative Party; both factions are similarly calling for aid money to be spent at home.<sup>7</sup>

The current aid environment, which has now been called a 'global war on aid' (Currión, 2017), is one piece of a much larger right-wing populist political shift. In a reaction against increased globalisation, right-wing populist leaders speak of the need to put one's nation first, and rail against aid programmes. To feed into frustration with economic mobility, such leaders place blame for the country's situation on the other, be it immigrants or other nations. Indeed, the debate on whether 'charity should begin at home' underscores the essence of what support for international assistance might require: a belief that national sacrifice is worth the potential benefit that those in other countries may reap from the assistance. Under what conditions might publics be more likely to support such a sacrifice and why?

Social identity theory (SIT) provides an avenue of exploration through which we can begin to address this question. SIT suggests that people who identify strongly with a superordinate group (in this case, the world) are more likely to support policies which will benefit other members of that group (people around the world), even if it involves sacrifices by members of a subordinate group (the nation) (Kramer & Brewer, 1984). On the other hand, when people strongly identify with a sub-ordinate grouping (the nation), they are likely to reject policies that require sacrifices of it.

Drawing from this theory, we argue that support for international humanitarian assistance can be partially found in a person's sense of identity. In other words, we expect that citizens of donor countries who have a strong sense of world identity will be more likely to support humanitarian aid, even though it comes from taxpayers' money. Respondents who have a strong attachment to their national identity, on the other hand, will be less likely to support international humanitarian assistance, due to the sacrifice required of themselves and their co-nationals. We do not, however, assume that these identities are mutually exclusive. Rather, individuals can simultaneously associate with multiple identities, both world and national, and we argue that the intersection of these identities should have important implications for support for aid. More specifically, we argue that the relationships we posit

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<sup>6</sup> Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/feb/27/trump-first-budget-us-foreign-aid>

<sup>7</sup> Retrieved from: [https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/feb/12/the-uks-aid-commitments-are-under-threat-its-time-to-defend-them?CMP=oth\\_b-aplnews\\_d-2](https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/feb/12/the-uks-aid-commitments-are-under-threat-its-time-to-defend-them?CMP=oth_b-aplnews_d-2)

should be strongest among those with a strong attachment to a world identity and weak attachment to their national identity.

Using responses of participants in the Organisation for Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) member countries from the 2005 wave of the World Value Survey (WVS), we test the proposition that perceptions of social identity influence levels of support for humanitarian assistance. The results of a series of analyses on the responses to a host of survey questions related to support for international humanitarian policies suggest that, relative to respondents who have a weak world and national identity, those with a combination of strong world and a weak national identification are more likely to support humanitarian aid, as are those with strong levels of both identification, though to a lesser degree when trade-offs with national interests are salient.

While our data are from an earlier period, the findings are particularly timely given the recent backlash against ODA in many donor countries. Our results suggest that to most effectively increase public support for aid, organisations should simultaneously encourage a sense of world citizenship and either downplay national identity, or at least the trade-offs with national priorities.

### **Determinants of Support for Overseas Assistance**

The empirical literature on public support for ODA remains a relatively limited area of enquiry (van Heerde & Hudson, 2010; Milner & Tingley, 2013). Yet, an understanding of the factors that affect this relationship have become increasingly important in light of research that points to the influence of public attitudes and beliefs on the decisions of political leaders on matters of international relations (Fearon, 1994; Schultz, 2001; Slantchev, 2006; Tomz, 2007; McGillivray & Smith, 2005). In this context, the level of public support for aid is important since public opinion can affect its quantity and quality (Mosley, 1985; Stern, 1998; Milner & Tingley, 2013).

One well-known feature regarding public opinion on overseas aid is the general lack of individual knowledge about such issues, especially in the USA (Diven & Constantelos, 2009; Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996), as well as in the UK (Henson, 2013). For example, a recent poll<sup>8</sup> shows that Americans consistently overestimate the share of the aid budget, believing that it accounted for approximately 25%

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<sup>8</sup> Retrieved from: <http://www.usglc.org/2010/12/03/americans-vastly-overestimate-u-s-foreign-assistance/>

of the federal budget when, in fact, expenditure accounts for a little over 1%.<sup>9</sup> Misperceptions of the amount of money spent on foreign aid are likely to make individuals less supportive of giving more resources to other countries. In fact, the citizens of countries whose governments provide strong public information and aid education programmes show higher levels of support for overseas aid (Otter, 2003; Diven & Constantelos, 2009). The lack of such knowledge makes other perceptions and attachments that much more important to the formation of opinions on aid policies.

For example, studies have linked support for increasing levels of overseas aid to certain dispositions. Individuals who view their own government as efficient and less corrupt are more likely to support it (Chong & Gradstein, 2006; van Heerde & Hudson, 2010; Popkin & Dimock, 2000), as are those who perceive that the aid itself is being used effectively in the recipient country (Stern, 1998; Henson, 2013). Individuals to the right of the ideological spectrum are less likely to support overseas aid (Paxton & Knack, 2012), while those with a marked religious faith are more likely to do so (Chong & Gradstein, 2006).

Generally, demographic and socio-economic variables play a more minor role on opinions on overseas aid with the exception of education and age – the younger and more educated an individual, the more likely s/he will support overseas aid (Paxton & Knack, 2008). Gender has had a mixed effect with respect to opinions on international humanitarian aid (Chong & Gradstein, 2006; Paxton & Knack, 2008). Income matters in the sense that the more affluent and economically satisfied a person is, the more likely s/he will support overseas aid (Chong & Gradstein, 2006; Paxton & Knack, 2008).

While scholars have considered a host of factors that may influence support for humanitarian assistance, we explore one that has received limited attention in current work, namely a person's social identity. Identity, as will be discussed below, plays an important role in forming public opinion on foreign policy. For example, many studies on public support for the European Union (EU) have found that individual identification with a European identity is associated with higher levels of support for European integration (e.g. Carey, 2002; Luedtke, 2005). Paxton and Knack (2012), and also find that individuals who identify as being 'members of the world' in the WVS are more likely to support overseas aid than those who identify with their town, region or country (182). In contrast to their research, however, our study offers the following novel contributions. First, by situating our expectations in SIT, we develop a richer theoretical foundation of linkages between identity and support for overseas aid.

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<sup>9</sup> Eurobarometer (1999) survey data suggest that the European public seems to be more informed on the size of foreign aid expenditures (see [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs\\_126\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_126_en.pdf))

Second, we test these hypotheses across a broader range of opinions on overseas aid. Third, we consider how the interplay of identities affects support for overseas assistance. This contribution is particularly important, since to fully understand how identity affects attitudes towards aid, one must examine how those intersecting identities affect support for it.

### **Social Identity Theory and Support for Aid**

We argue that individual support for humanitarian aid is in part affected by the extent to which individuals identify with different groups. Social psychologists typically understand groups as '[collections] of people who share the same social identification or define themselves in terms of the same social category membership' (Turner, 1984, p. 530). Social identity theory posits that individuals have a natural inclination to associate themselves and others with psychological groups. Furthermore, people tend to view their own group as distinct from others and assign a positive bias to their fellow group members (Tajfel, 1982; Turner, 1984, 1985; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1982). This in-group favouritism is thought to be derived from the need for a positive social identity, and the tendency to define ourselves according to perceived distinctiveness (Tajfel, 1982, p. 34).

Social psychologists interested in the dynamics of group identity have amassed a considerable body of evidence that supports the notion that individual behaviour is influenced by biases generated through in-group and out-group comparisons. Billig and Tajfel (1973) and Brewer and Silver (1978), for example, found that subjects who were categorised based on minor differences exhibited a substantive in-group bias when evaluating members of other groups. Interestingly, this bias persisted even when subjects were randomly assigned and informed that their fellow group members were randomly drawn.

Other researchers interested in social identity have studied the impact of re-categorisation on opinion formation. The Common Ingroup Identity Model (Gaertner et al., 1993), for example, argues that re-categorisation into broader (superordinate) psychological groups helps reduce the above-mentioned tendency for intergroup bias. That is, by joining existing groups into a common broader group, biases that were once strong can be diluted and a positive bias forms towards new group members. There is substantial experimental evidence that supports this proposition (Gaertner et al., 1989; Dovidio et al., 1997).

We think these dynamics may be relevant for foreign policies that require either some form of cooperation among nations, or that involve giving aid to other countries, as is the case with international humanitarian assistance. Many of these policies aim to assist groups beyond the nation state. While policies such as regional integration may generate benefits for the nation, they also likely

come with costs, especially with respect to national sovereignty. This is even more acute with respect to humanitarian aid since there may be very little direct benefit to the donor country, and individuals in donor countries are prone to perceive overseas aid as entailing a higher cost to their nation than it actually does. Individual attachment to a superordinate identity has the potential to generate support for such policies, as individuals develop a broader sense of their in-group, while attachment to a subordinate identity, such as the nation, might reduce support for such policies.

Empirical research on identity and support for regional integration has found strong support for these linkages. Individuals with a stronger supra-national (e.g. North American) identity exhibit higher levels of support for the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and further North American integration than do those with a stronger national identity (Boussalis et al., 2015). Similarly, a strong attachment to a European identity, rather than a national identity, is associated with higher support for the EU (Carey, 2002; Hooghe & Marks, 2004, 2005; Christin & Trechsel, 2002; Luedtke, 2005).

A similar process may affect support for international humanitarian assistance. Taxpayers fund government financial and material assistance to developing countries and, as such, it can be the subject of contention, especially if people perceive greater needs at home. And, as we noted in the introduction, politicians like Trump often highlight the trade-off of national costs versus world benefits. Individuals with a strong attachment to the nation may therefore be less supportive of overseas aid.

Other citizens, however, may accept some national sacrifice if they perceive people in other countries as belonging to a common group – humanity, for instance. The concept of ‘global citizenship’ is often used interchangeably with a multitude of labels such as, ‘... universal, world, post-national, and transnational citizenship’ (Reysen & Katzarska-Miller, 2013, p. 859; Marshall, 2015). It is generally understood as a superordinate global identity, focused on inclusive citizenship. Fundamentally, the characteristics that define global citizenship are ‘...global connectedness, global awareness and knowledge, a sense of responsibility to act, [and] caring for others...’ (Reysen et al., 2013, p.4). International organisations, as well as development agencies, invested in supporting global citizenship education have defined this type of citizenship as, ‘a sense of belonging to a broader community, and common humanity. It emphasizes political, economic, social and cultural interdependency and interconnectedness between the local, the national and the global’.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Retrieved from: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002329/232993e.pdf>

The idea of a global, or world, identity<sup>11</sup> has become an increasingly important concept in international development policy (Biesta et al., 2016). In fact, via educational programmes, government and international organisations have invested in initiatives designed to transform the way citizens think about, and engage with, global issues<sup>12</sup> (Davies & Pike, 2008). The onset of globalisation ushered in global citizen education programmes, which have focused on creating world citizens who are capable of understanding and functioning in a globalised world. For example, listed as one of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is the promotion of learning related to the idea of global citizenship.<sup>13</sup> In addition, rich nations such as the UK and the USA have long invested in global education programmes meant to equip ‘... new world citizens with proper knowledge of, skills for, and disposition applicable to the globalised world’ (Fujikane, 2003, p.145). At the same time, it is important to note that these programmes are not directly connect to overseas aid projects.

Only one empirical study, to our knowledge, has examined whether identification with a world identity influences preferences for overseas assistance. Using survey data from the WVS and Gallup, Paxton and Knack (2008) show that individuals with higher levels of attachment to a world identity are more inclined to provide economic aid to poorer countries.<sup>14</sup> While this study is suggestive, it did not consider the role of national identity and the combinations of different identities, and only looked at the effects of a world identity on one dependent variable. To date, much of the work on identity and support for overseas aid has treated national and world identity as separate and mutually exclusive categories. This essentialist concept of identity in which one identity is made salient at the expense of another (Smith, 1992) has been significantly challenged in the literature (Citrin & Sides, 2004; Carey, 2002; Hooge & Marks, 2004). Scholars who have questioned this zero-sum model of identity assert that it is entirely possible for individuals to feel that they are part of several communities, ‘...without having to choose some primary identification’ (Risse, 2004, p.248). It is generally understood that individuals hold multiple identities, which can either be ‘nested’, also known as the Russian ‘Matruska doll’ model

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<sup>11</sup> For the purposes of this article we employ the term ‘world identity’ in order to maintain consistency with the vocabulary used in the World Values Survey, from which we draw our data. However, we view ‘world’ citizen as being synonymous with ‘global’ citizen in the ways described above. The defining factor being a superordinate identity – one that extends beyond the nation-state and incorporates a consciousness and concern for the broader global community.

<sup>12</sup> See: <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/global-citizenship/global-citizenship-guides>;  
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002329/232993e.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Retrieved from: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg4> - See Goal 4.7

<sup>14</sup> More relevant to our study, the question which the authors select as a dependent variable from the World Values Survey asks the respondent if they agree or disagree to the following question, ‘Some people favor, and others are against, having this country provide economic aid to poorer countries’. Nine countries were represented in their analysis: Australia, Finland, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and the United States.



of identity, or blended into one another as in the ‘marble cake’ model of multiple identities (Risse, 2004, p.251). Turning to the domain of interest of our study, we assume that individuals can concurrently hold strong national and world identities. The question then becomes how the interplay between them influences support for international humanitarian assistance.

We hypothesise that an individual’s attachment to a world identity is positively related to support for international humanitarian assistance, in line with past work. Where we build on the literature is by looking at the interplay of world and national identity. In particular, we expect this relationship to be especially pronounced among those with a high world identity and low national identity, since the trade-offs will seem less stark (H1). Those with a high world identity and a high national identity may exhibit weaker positive effects (H2), since the national costs associated with such policies may be more evident to such individuals. Meanwhile, a strong attachment to a national identity and a weak attachment to a world identity should be inversely related with support for international humanitarian assistance (H3), since such individuals do not identify with a broader group. It is unclear how those with low levels of attachment to the nation and the world will react to international humanitarian assistance. They could potentially be more supportive of such policies than those high in national identity and low in world identity. However, such individuals may also be so disengaged from politics that they are even less supportive than those with a strong attachment to the nation and a weak world attachment.

This suggestion, however, runs counter to what Chouliaraki (2013) observes of the communication strategies many aid-focused development organisations are increasingly adopting. According to Chouliaraki (2013), development organisations have become ever more reluctant to communicate the value and worth of their work as helping a ‘common humanity’ but rather tend to seek support through campaigns that give citizens a sense of aid helping distant ‘others’ – strangers whom they will never meet, and with campaigns that serve a citizen’s ‘self-oriented morality, where doing good to others is about ‘how I feel’ and must, therefore, be rewarded by minor gratifications to the self’ (Chouliaraki, 2013, p. 8).

### **Data and Variables**

To examine the impact of multiple identities on support for international humanitarian assistance, we turn to data from the fifth wave (2005-2009) of the WVS. Because the DAC coordinates international poverty-reduction and development efforts and includes the world’s largest official donors, we focus exclusively on respondents from DAC member-countries. Specifically, our sample includes respondents

from the following 12 countries (the other 12 were not in the survey or respondents were not asked relevant questions): Australia (2005), Canada (2005), Finland (2005), Germany (2006), Italy (2005), Japan (2005), Norway (2007), South Korea (2005), Spain (2007), Sweden (2006), Switzerland (2007), and the United States (2006).

We benefit from the fact that the fifth wave of the WVS includes questions which gauge a respondent's sense of world and national identities, as well as their support for a wide range of international humanitarian policies. We are therefore able to look at these relationships for a much broader set of measures than past scholarship has been able to. We rely on wave 5, specifically, because it provides the most extensive battery of aid-related questions in the WVS series. Previous waves of in the series include only one or two relevant questions and none explicitly address trade-offs with national interest. We note that opinion data used in our study were gathered before the global financial crisis. Attitudes towards aid should be more favourable during the period covered in our article than those during and following the economic crisis (see Heinrich et al., 2016). Unfortunately, we could not include more recent data from the sixth wave of the WVS (2010-2014) as the survey does not include questions related to international aid. Further, we could not find more recent surveys, other than the fifth wave, that include questions on support for humanitarian aid as well as national and global identification. Eurobarometer 77.4 (2012) includes a set of questions on attitudes to development aid and national versus European identity, but does not ask respondents how strongly they identify with a global identity. Below we outline the main dependent and independent variables as well as control variables that are used in the empirical analysis.

#### *Dependent Variables: Support for Humanitarian Assistance*

Several questions from the WVS can be used to approximate support for international humanitarian policies. The first informs the respondent of the percentage of national income allocated to overseas aid and then asks for an opinion on whether the amount is appropriate (*Foreign Aid Levels*). For example, US respondents were asked: 'in 2003, this country's government allocated a tenth of one percent of the national income to foreign aid – that is, \$US 38.05 per person. Do you think this amount is too low, too high, or about right?' In our analyses, 'too low' is coded as 3, 'about right' is 2 and 'too high' is 1. Just over half of DAC respondents thought that the amount of international aid given by their respective nation was 'about right'. Almost 40% of respondents thought the amount was 'too low' and only 10% thought it was 'too high'.

The second question on international aid asks for a yes or no response to a whether the respondent would be willing to pay higher taxes to increase aid to poor countries (*Taxes for Aid*). We coded 'yes' responses as 1, and 'no' as 0. To this question, about 40% of respondents answered yes.

Finally, we include a question that invokes a sense of personal sacrifice for assistance with a global problem by prompting a clear national trade-off for solving world problems (*Prioritize World Poverty*). Specifically, the question asks: 'thinking of your own country's problems, should your country's leaders give top priority to help reducing poverty in the world or should they give top priority to solve your own country's problems?' To this question respondents were asked to indicate where they think priority should lie on a ten-point scale, where 10 means top priority should be given to reduce global poverty and a 1 means priority should be given to national problems. The average response on this scale for DAC respondents was 3.8, which indicates that most of those surveyed thought leaders should give more priority to national problems.

#### *Independent Variables*

With regard to identity, respondents were asked how strongly they identify with a national and world identity. Specifically, respondents were asked to report their level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements: 'I see myself as a citizen of (nation)' and 'I see myself as a world citizen'. These are questions where the objects of identification are national and supranational entities and the nature of the relationship between the respondent and object that is being probed is one of identification, rather than say, proximity (see Sinnott, 2005, p. 212). Possible responses of agreement and disagreement lie on a four-point scale, with higher values indicating stronger agreement with the statement(s). Consistent with SIT, we expect that a strong sense of world identity will be positively related to support for international humanitarian assistance, while a strong national identity will have a negative effect.

As noted in the previous section, these identities need not be mutually exclusive: people can hold multiple identities concurrently. To account for this, we also test the effect of the intersection between these identity variables on levels of support for overseas aid. Specifically, we generate dummy variables that measure the combinations of high and low attachment to national and world identity.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> High attachment to national identity is coded as a dichotomous variable that takes the value of 1 when respondents declared that they 'strongly agree' or 'agree' that they see themselves as part of their nation. Low attachment to national identity is coded as zero for participants who responded with 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree'. High attachment to a world identity is coded as 1 if respondents 'strongly agree' or 'agree' to seeing themselves as a

For the sample of respondents from the DAC countries, 3.5% held a high world and low national identity, 22.8% declared a low world and high national identity, and 71.7% strongly identified with both identities. The large share of respondents who identify strongly with both a national and world identity underscores our discussion on how people can indeed hold multiple salient identities. However, there is also some variation in attachments to these identities across countries (see Figure A in the appendix). Since all of the dependent variables are coded such that higher values mean more support for international humanitarian assistance, we expect the most supportive individuals to be those who are high in world identity and low in national identity, and the next most supportive to be those who are high in world identity and high in national identity. We are agnostic about whether the least support will come from those low in both identities or low in world identity and high in national identity.

In addition to investigating the effects of identity on support for humanitarian foreign policies, we also control for certain demographic, economic and political indicators to ensure proper specification of the regression equations employed in the analysis. We control for the respondent's income level and level of economic satisfaction, which should lead to higher support for assistance (Paxton & Knack, 2008). Age and sex are also included, with the expectation that men and older people are less likely to support international humanitarian assistance (Paxton and Knack 2008). To measure religiosity, we include a measure of frequency of attendance of a place of worship, which should translate into support for higher levels of foreign aid (Paxton & Knack, 2008; Chong & Gradstein, 2006; van Heerde & Hudson, 2010). Ideology is coded on an 11-point scale, with higher values indicating a left-wing position, which should be positively correlated with support for aid (Paxton & Knack, 2008). Confidence in government is measured on 4-point scale, with 4 as 'a great deal' of confidence, and 1 as 'none at all'; as others have found, we expect it to be positively associated with support for aid (Chong & Gradstein, 2006; van Heerde & Hudson, 2010; Popkin & Dimock, 2000). We also include controls to approximate a respondent's level of knowledge about world affairs, with measures for education, political interest, and familiarity with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).<sup>16</sup> We expect that

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'world citizen'; low attachment is coded as zero for 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' responses. These dummy variables were then used to create the identity combination variables used in the analyses.

<sup>16</sup> Van Heerde and Hudson (2010:400), find that awareness of world poverty is negatively related to concern with the problem. The authors argue that this inverse relationship is due to the 'largely negative, sensationalistic and truncated nature of media coverage of global poverty' which makes respondents doubt the usefulness of policy interventions. However, we think it is equally likely that awareness of world events and/or development-related problems might have the opposite effect. People who seek out information on global issues and problems might be more inclined to empathize with those affected by such problems. Furthermore, those with higher levels of

higher levels of education, higher levels of interest, (the specific question reads ‘How interested in politics are you?’, and respondents are asked to indicate their level of interest on a 4-point scale), and knowledge of the MDGs (‘Have you heard of the Millennium Development Goals?’) should increase support for international humanitarian assistance.

## Analysis

We estimate three regression equations for each dependent variable described above. The first model estimates the effect of world and national identity on levels of support for overseas assistance. The second model adds country dummy variables to the first model in order to account for country-level effects. The third model estimates the effect of the multiple identity dummies on support for humanitarian aid, leaving low world and low national identity as the baseline, while the fourth model adds country dummies to this model. The results of the analyses are discussed below.

We begin by examining the relationship between identity and support for a higher allocation of foreign aid. We employ ordered logistic regression to estimate the *Foreign Aid Levels* variable since the responses are ordinal. Here we specifically observe whether respondents believe that their country is giving too low, about right or too high of a percentage of national income to overseas aid.

The results of the analyses are presented in Table 1. Turning to model 1, as expected, identifying as a ‘world citizen’ has a positive and significant effect ( $p < 0.01$ ) on agreeing that the current level of foreign aid is ‘too low’. Substantively, holding other variables at their mean values,<sup>17</sup> the predicted probability of thinking that the level of overseas aid is inadequate increases by 13.3 percentage points as one moves from low to high world identity. Self-identification with one’s national identity, on the other hand, is not significantly related to a respondent’s opinion regarding the level of overseas aid.

Models 3 and 4 estimate the effect of identity combinations on opinion toward the size of the national overseas aid budget, with the latter model also including country-fixed effects. We find that, relative to a combination of low world and low national identification, a high world/low national and high world/high national identity combination has a significant and positive effect (1% error level in Model 3 and 5% error level in Model 4) on the likelihood that a respondent perceives their country’s aid budget as ‘too low’. In order to see which world identity combination is most supportive of such policies,

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knowledge will be more aware of the fact that countries do not allocate a very high proportion of their budgets to overseas aid.

<sup>17</sup> For all of the substantive effects in the article, we hold all other variables at their mean value.

we need to look at the substantive effects and test the equality of the coefficients between the high world/low national and high world/high national variables. Respondents with a high world/low national identity combination are 11 percentage points more likely to agree that aid is ‘too low’, while respondents with a high world/high national combination are 8 percentage points more likely, which is in line with expectations, since those with an exclusive world identity are most supportive. However, there is no statistically significant difference between the two high world identity combination variables ( $p=0.327$ ). We therefore find only partial support for our expectations with this first measure. High world identity seems to have a similar positive effect on support for the overseas aid budget, regardless of the level of national identity. Part of the reason for this finding may be that the question itself does not prime any national considerations. However, as expected, those with low world identity are less supportive.

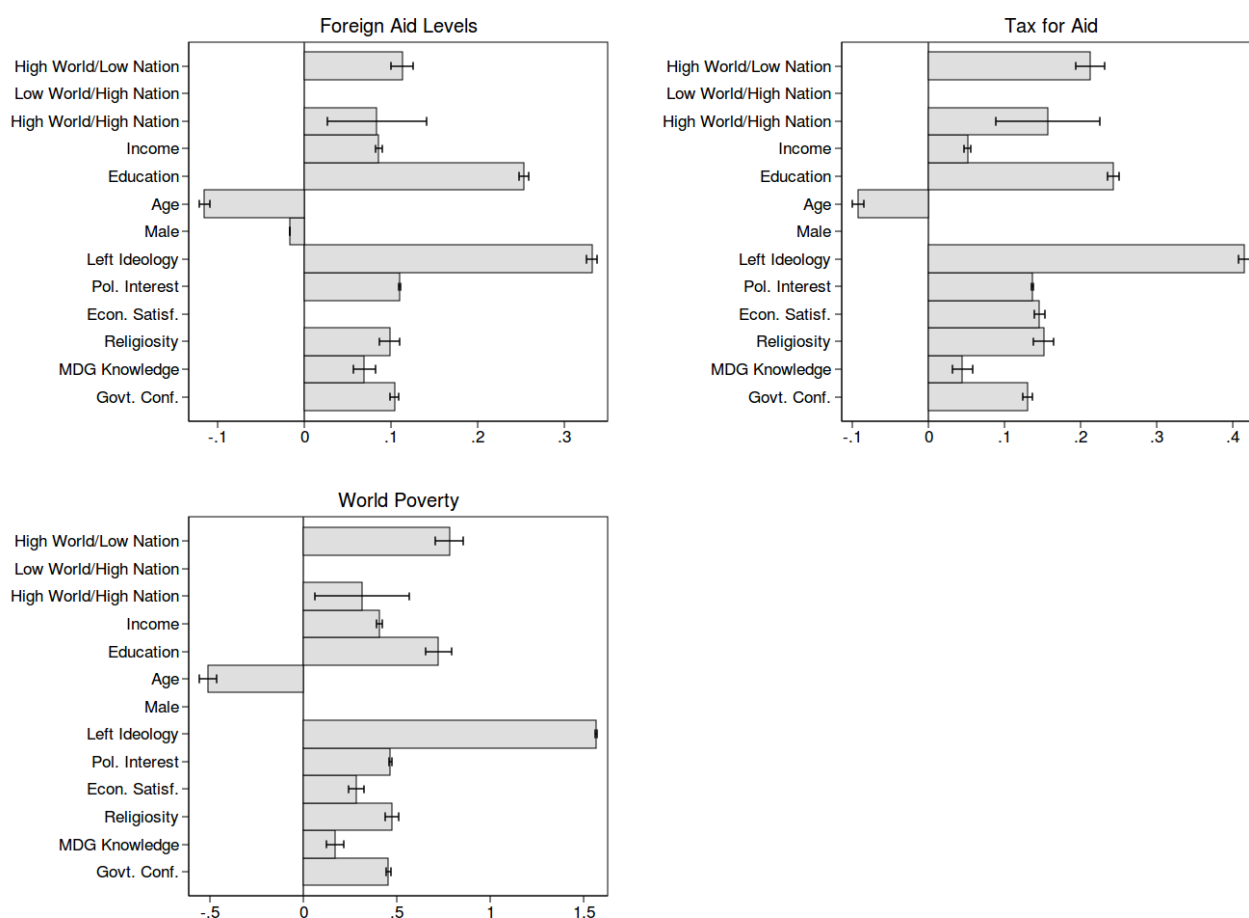
Table 1: Ordered Logistic Regression Analysis of Attitudes towards Foreign Aid Spending Levels

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
World Identity	0.192*** (0.03)	0.180*** (0.03)		
National Identity	-0.017 (0.03)	-0.054 (0.04)		
High World / Low National			0.545*** (0.20)	0.489** (0.20)
Low World / High National			0.148 (0.17)	0.093 (0.17)
High World / High National			0.441*** (0.17)	0.369** (0.17)
Income	0.039*** (0.01)	0.042*** (0.01)	0.038*** (0.01)	0.041*** (0.01)
Education	0.178*** (0.02)	0.191*** (0.02)	0.182*** (0.02)	0.194*** (0.02)
Age	-0.006*** (0.00)	-0.006*** (0.00)	-0.006*** (0.00)	-0.006*** (0.00)
Male	-0.072* (0.04)	-0.069 (0.04)	-0.074* (0.04)	-0.072* (0.04)
Political Ideology (Left)	0.167*** (0.01)	0.162*** (0.01)	0.168*** (0.01)	0.164*** (0.01)
Political Interest	0.093*** (0.02)	0.157*** (0.03)	0.095*** (0.02)	0.157*** (0.03)
MDG Knowledge	0.397*** (0.05)	0.281*** (0.05)	0.404*** (0.05)	0.290*** (0.05)

Economic Satisfaction	0.031*** (0.01)	0.013 (0.01)	0.031*** (0.01)	0.013 (0.01)
Religiosity	0.024** (0.01)	0.071*** (0.01)	0.024** (0.01)	0.069*** (0.01)
Govt. Confidence	0.210*** (0.03)	0.152*** (0.03)	0.209*** (0.03)	0.148*** (0.03)
Cut1	0.914*** (0.19)	0.906*** (0.20)	0.799*** (0.21)	0.865*** (0.21)
Cut2	3.806*** (0.19)	3.893*** (0.20)	3.690*** (0.21)	3.850*** (0.22)
Country Dummies	No	Yes	No	Yes
Pseudo R-squared	0.050	0.071	0.049	0.071
N	9193	9193	9193	9193
BIC	16381.1	16092.0	16400.9	16111.4

\* p<0.10, \*\* p<0.05, \*\*\* p<0.010

Figure 1: Change in dependent variable given a minimum to maximum shift in values of the independent variable, while holding other variables at their mean values.



Note: These effects were calculated from Model 4 in each analysis. Statistically insignificant effects are depicted as having a zero change on the dependent variable.

With respect to other factors that influence support for overseas aid, we find that income, education, left-of-centre ideology, interest in politics, younger individuals, knowledge of the MDGs, and confidence in government are significantly and positively ( $p < 0.01$ ) related to support for higher levels of overseas aid in all four models. Religious faith is also positively associated with higher support for overseas aid across all models at the 5% error level. We also find, in most models, that males are less likely ( $p < 0.10$ ) to agree that current aid spending is inadequate. To get a better sense of how the effect sizes of these control variables compare to those of the identity variables, we calculated the change in the predicted probability of declaring current aid spending as 'too low' when each variable moves from its minimum to maximum value, while holding all other variables at their mean value. The substantive effects are displayed graphically in the top left of Figure 1.<sup>18</sup> The effect of high world/low national on attitudes towards the current aid allocation are greater than the effect size of income, sex, political interest, religiosity, knowledge of MDGs, and confidence in government, but weaker than education, age, and political ideology. Specifically, holding other variables at their mean values, a minimum to maximum shift in the education variable is associated with a 25.3 percentage point increase in agreeing that current foreign aid spending is 'too low', while a comparable shift from political right to left leads to a 33.2 percentage point increase.

We turn next to the relationship between identity and whether a respondent is willing to pay higher taxes to increase the amount of ODA their country provides to poorer countries. This measure therefore primes greater individual costs to contributing to overseas aid. We use logistic regression for the *Tax for Aid* models since the possible responses to this question are dichotomous (1=yes). Table 2 presents the results from these analyses.

Again, and consistent with our expectations, in models 1 and 2 we can see that a respondent's world identification has a positive and significant ( $p < 0.01$ ) effect on whether s/he would accept an increased tax burden in exchange for more aid to developing countries. When we include country-fixed effects in model 2, we also find that national identity is negatively related ( $p < 0.01$ ) to support for increased aid spending. Focusing on model 2, we find that while holding other variables at their mean values, a shift from the minimum to maximum level of world identity is associated with an 18.6 percentage point increase in the predicted probability of supporting an increased tax burden to fund

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<sup>18</sup> Substantive effects presented in Figure 1 are computed from the results of model 4 for each dependent variable.



overseas aid. Likewise, we find a move from low to high national identity leads to a 8.3 percentage point decrease in support.

Table 2: Logistic Regression Analysis of Support for Increasing Taxes for Foreign Aid

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
World Identity	0.321*** (0.03)	0.273*** (0.03)		
National Identity	-0.062 (0.04)	-0.114*** (0.04)		
High World / Low National			1.052*** (0.25)	0.940*** (0.25)
Low World / High National			0.406* (0.22)	0.263 (0.22)
High World / High National			0.939*** (0.22)	0.712*** (0.22)
Income	0.025** (0.01)	0.025** (0.01)	0.022** (0.01)	0.024** (0.01)
Education	0.189*** (0.02)	0.181*** (0.02)	0.192*** (0.02)	0.183*** (0.02)
Age	-0.006*** (0.00)	-0.004*** (0.00)	-0.006*** (0.00)	-0.005*** (0.00)
Male	0.026 (0.05)	0.008 (0.05)	0.023 (0.05)	0.004 (0.05)
Political Ideology (Left)	0.209*** (0.01)	0.206*** (0.01)	0.212*** (0.01)	0.209*** (0.01)
Political Interest	0.115*** (0.03)	0.194*** (0.03)	0.119*** (0.03)	0.195*** (0.03)
MDG Knowledge	0.258*** (0.06)	0.175*** (0.06)	0.272*** (0.06)	0.186*** (0.06)
Economic Satisfaction	0.097*** (0.01)	0.072*** (0.01)	0.096*** (0.01)	0.070*** (0.01)
Religiosity	0.092*** (0.01)	0.108*** (0.01)	0.090*** (0.01)	0.105*** (0.01)
Govt. Confidence	0.226*** (0.03)	0.192*** (0.03)	0.218*** (0.03)	0.183*** (0.03)
Constant	-4.981*** (0.22)	-5.151*** (0.23)	-5.057*** (0.27)	-5.299*** (0.28)
Country Dummies	No	Yes	No	Yes
Pseudo R-squared	0.086	0.115	0.086	0.114
N	9023	9023	9023	9023
BIC	11224.7	10964.3	11240.9	10982.4

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.010$

Models 3 and 4 display the tests of the effects of identity combinations on levels of support for increased taxes to fund overseas aid. We find that after controlling for country-fixed effects in Model 4, low world/high national loses statistical significance while high world/low national and high world/high national remain positively and significantly ( $p < 0.01$ ) associated with support for tax increases to fund overseas aid relative to the baseline of low world/low national. The substantive effects are displayed in the top right of Figure 1. A move from low world/low national to high world/low national leads to a 21.2 percentage point increase in the predicted probability of agreeing to a tax increase, while a move from low world/low national to high world/high national is associated with a 15.6 percentage point increase. In line with our theoretical expectations, we find that the effect of having a high world identity and low national identity on support for increased aid, even at the expense of increased taxes, is significantly higher ( $p < 0.10$ ) than the effect of the combination of high world and high national identification. That is, once the question makes potential trade-offs more important to individuals, we find the expected relationships.

Turning to the control variables, we find by and large similar results to those in the *Foreign Aid Levels* models, though the sex of the respondent is not significant. The substantive effects displayed in Figure 1 show that the identity combination variables have a greater effect on attitudes towards increased taxation for overseas aid than income, age, political interest, economic satisfaction, religious faith, MDG knowledge, and confidence in government. Consistent with the *Foreign Aid Levels* results, education and political ideology have a greater impact than the identity variables.

The last question we analyse is to what extent, if any, respondents think national leaders should give priority to eradicating world poverty over dealing with domestic problems. This question makes the trade-off with national problems most salient. We employ an ordinary least squares regression when analysing these models since responses are given on a 10-point scale where a 10 means top priority should be given to reducing world poverty and a 1 means priority should be given to domestic problems. The results are displayed in Table 3.

Consistent with SIT, world citizenship identification is significantly and positively ( $p < 0.01$ ) related to support for prioritising reducing world poverty over dealing with national problems, while national identification is negatively and significantly associated ( $p < 0.01$  in Model 2) with such a policy. A shift from the minimum to maximum level of world identity leads to a one-point increase on the 10-point scale of agreement, while a similar shift for national identity is associated with a 0.8-point decrease.

Table 3: OLS Analysis of Prioritizing World Poverty

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
World Identity	0.326*** (0.03)	0.319*** (0.03)		
National Identity	-0.071** (0.04)	-0.282*** (0.04)		
High World / Low National			0.918*** (0.20)	0.782*** (0.19)
Low World / High National			0.224 (0.17)	-0.074 (0.16)
High World / High National			0.629*** (0.16)	0.314** (0.16)
Income	0.041*** (0.01)	0.047*** (0.01)	0.040*** (0.01)	0.045*** (0.01)
Education	0.076*** (0.02)	0.114*** (0.02)	0.085*** (0.02)	0.121*** (0.02)
Age	-0.005*** (0.00)	-0.005*** (0.00)	-0.005*** (0.00)	-0.006*** (0.00)
Male	-0.048 (0.04)	-0.020 (0.04)	-0.053 (0.04)	-0.028 (0.04)
Political Ideology (Left)	0.182*** (0.01)	0.168*** (0.01)	0.185*** (0.01)	0.174*** (0.01)
Political Interest	0.173*** (0.03)	0.156*** (0.03)	0.179*** (0.03)	0.155*** (0.03)
MDG Knowledge	0.298*** (0.05)	0.154*** (0.05)	0.312*** (0.05)	0.170*** (0.05)
Economic Satisfaction	0.088*** (0.01)	0.032*** (0.01)	0.089*** (0.01)	0.031*** (0.01)
Religiosity	-0.011 (0.01)	0.084*** (0.01)	-0.011 (0.01)	0.079*** (0.01)
Govt. Confidence	0.217*** (0.03)	0.164*** (0.03)	0.218*** (0.03)	0.152*** (0.03)
Constant	0.220 (0.20)	1.382*** (0.22)	0.338 (0.21)	1.143*** (0.23)
Country Dummies	No	Yes	No	Yes
R-squared	0.078	0.164	0.073	0.157
N	11457	11457	11457	11457
BIC	51568.2	50542.1	51633.6	50650.8

\* p&lt;0.10, \*\* p&lt;0.05, \*\*\* p&lt;0.010

Regarding the effects of identity combinations on support for prioritising world poverty over national problems, we find results in line with the previous estimations. That is, high world/low national ( $p<0.01$ ) and high world/high national ( $p<0.05$ ) are both positively and significantly associated with agreement with such a policy, regardless of whether country-fixed effects are included. Furthermore, the coefficients on both measures are significantly greater than the low world/high national variable ( $p<0.01$ ). Again, we do not find evidence of a low world/high national effect on prioritising world problems relative to the low world/low national baseline. Looking at model 4 and the bottom left panel of Figure 1, a shift from low world/low national to high world/low national is related with a 0.8-point increase on the 10-point scale of agreement, while the comparable effect moving to high world/high national is a 0.3-point increase. The coefficients of the high world/low national and high world/high national variables are significantly different ( $p<0.01$ ). Therefore, in line with expectations, world identity exerts an even stronger effect among those low in national identification.

The results of the control variables are generally consistent with the previous models. As shown in the bottom left of Figure 1, the high world/low national identity combination variable has a greater effect on the prioritization of world poverty than income, education, age, political interest, economic satisfaction, religious faith, knowledge of the MDGs, and confidence in government. The high world/high national identity combination variable only had a greater effect than the economic satisfaction and MDG knowledge variables. Similar to the previous models, the effect of political ideology was, again, greater than those of the identity combination variables.

## Conclusion

This study has extended what is known about how identity affects support for public policy by examining how two identities, being a world citizen and national citizen, shape support for overseas assistance, and how the intersection between these two identities affects this support. Consistent with our expectations based on the SIT literature, we find that as individuals identify with the world community, they tend to be more supportive of their national government focusing on world poverty and giving aid. Moreover, though we find it less robustly, national identification also tends to be related to less support for aid; this is especially the case among responses to questions that made the trade-offs associated with such support (pay more taxes for increased aid) most explicit.

Further, consistent with our expectations, in exploring the intersection between these two identities we find that it is often the case that the strongest positive effects obtain among those with a high world and low national identity (relative to all other identity types), especially for the questions

that explicitly dealt with trade-offs. However, those with a high world and high national identity are also generally supportive of increased aid (relative to those with a low world and high national identity and those low on both identities). While such individuals may face conflict between the two identities, the positive effects of a world identity on support for humanitarian aid outweighs the negative effects that may arise from having a high national identity. Perhaps this result suggests that such individuals weigh more heavily the identity most relevant to the question at hand. Since all these questions deal with support for those in other countries, their world identity may have been more salient when giving their answers.

Another important take-away from our results is that the effects of strongly identifying with a world identity on support for humanitarian aid are generally larger than all other standard predictors of support, save ideology and education. That is, the findings for identity are not only robust, but are substantively quite meaningful, and rival a long-term political predisposition.

This study lends further credence to literature that finds that the ways in which humanitarian assistance efforts are framed can have an important impact on how much support they garner (e.g. Darnton and Kirk 2011). Our findings suggest that it would be worthwhile for development agencies to foster a greater sense of world identification, and potentially downplay national identity. While it may be difficult to change a person's sense of national identity, if the trade-off between national interest and overseas aid are less salient, those high in world identity are more supportive of increased aid, regardless of their level of national identity. A much higher percentage of the public in DAC countries fell into the category of being high in world identity and high in national identity. A very small percentage was high in world identity and low in national identity, though the percentage falling into this category was higher in countries such as Germany and Switzerland (around 9%). However, increasing world identity and downplaying national identity in the context of aid may be a challenge in countries that have seen the rise of populist leaders and movements. In such contexts, organisations may need to challenge nationalist rhetoric more directly in an effort to reduce high levels of national identity.

The implications from our findings, however, run counter to what development organisations are increasingly doing, which, as we have already seen above, Chouliaraki (2013) claims are justifying their work less as helping 'common humanity', focusing instead on campaigns that give a sense of aid helping distant 'others', and that satisfy a citizen's 'self-oriented morality, where doing good to others is about 'how I feel' and must, therefore, be rewarded by minor gratifications to the self' (Chouliaraki, 2013, p. 8). To the extent that this reflects current practices, the results of our analyses call for a radical transformation in how development agencies currently tend to engage with the public when

communicating the need and value of their work. Our findings suggest that communication strategies should better emulate themes prominent in United Nations education programmes that aim to create global citizens.

Arguably, this is a crucial time for development agencies to undertake such a transformation. Where a populist nationalist tide has emboldened aid sceptics both in public office and in the wider citizenry, development organisations will find it particularly challenging to win back popular support. Development agencies may be tempted to speak to nationalist themes – for example, by framing aid's worth as reflecting the protection of national interests. Our research suggests that this is not likely to be very effective since by heightening a sense of national identity, such campaigns may inadvertently lose support from aid sceptics and sympathisers alike. The task at hand is not about re-aligning popular values, which is far too great for the development sector to take on alone (Darnton & Kirk, 2011, p. 9). Rather, development agencies should seek to recapture how the debate is framed and, given the political climates in which most are currently operating, this will be a formidable challenge in its own right. The more such organisations can create a sense of 'us' rather than 'them', the more effective they are likely to be in retaining and winning support.

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## Appendix

Figure A: Percentage of respondents, by donor country, who identify: (left) strongly with a world identity and weakly with a national identity; (middle) strongly with a national identity and weakly with a world identity; and (right) strongly with both a world and national identity.

